

November 24, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David C. Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Training Trip Policy

Each observer candidate, upon successful completion of the NMFS Observer Training Session, will observe their first trip with a certified training trip trainer. Current certified training trip trainers are: Paul O'Donnell, Dave Marrocco, Leah Bowe, Brent Courchene and Mike Beattie. The first trip will be a *complete* gillnet trip and if possible will take place in the area the observer will be located. If there are no *complete* gillnet trips on the Mid-Atlantic sea day schedule then the first trip, for Mid-Atlantic observers, will be a *complete* gillnet trip in the Northeast. If this occurs, and to avoid delays, the Mid-Atlantic observer candidates should be scheduled as a priority over observer candidates from the Northeast. If, after a week, a Mid-Atlantic observer has not been able to accomplish a Northeast training trip the Training Coordinator will evaluate the situation and take appropriate action. If the first two options aren't possible then the observer's first trip can be a *limited* gillnet trip in the Mid-Atlantic. This last option should be implemented only if timely coordination is impossible and would require approval by the Training Coordinator. The idea is to have the first training trip be *complete*, if at all possible. The next 3 trips are considered 'training trips', and are coded as such in the database (program code 010). The observer is working independently during these trips, but is still considered to be in training status and is restricted to day trips. It is preferred that new observers complete an otter trawl training trip with a certified training trip trainer as one of the 3 training trips, but it is not required.

Each training trip must be sent to Woods Hole immediately (observers should be sending individual trips in after landing); training trips will be edited as a priority over all other trips and data editors will be in contact with observers after each trip. After the 4th training trip the data editor's supervisor and the

training coordinator will review the data and if approved, the observer will become 'NMFS certified'. Once certified, trips will no longer be coded as 'training trips' in the database, but instead will be coded as standard trips (program code 000). After the 6th trip the observer is required to meet his/her editor in Woods Hole for a debriefing, which will be scheduled by the data editor. If not logistically convenient the observer and editor will set up a phone debriefing. After certification and upon approval from the data editor's supervisor and the training coordinator the observer may begin to schedule multi-day trips.

The observer, at a minimum, must call their editor after their first multi-day trip to debrief and if requested, must meet his/her editor in Woods Hole for a formal debriefing (potentially the observers second debriefing). The first trip of each new gear type observed, and the first *complete* gillnet trip observed, will be coded as a training trip (program code 010) for data quality purposes. It is the responsibility of the observer's area coordinator to contact the data editor prior to scheduling the observer on a new gear type. In addition, area coordinators must report a program code of 010 when calling/emailing in their OBSCON. The observer, at a minimum, must call their editor after their first trip observing the new gear type to debrief and if requested, must meet his/her editor in Woods Hole for a formal debriefing.

If you have any questions please contact Sara E.W. Quinn at Sara.Quinn@noaa.gov or (508)495-2227.

Thank you.